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SUBJECT: Cuba, Perhaps Germany Contest for UNODC FinGov
Co-Chairmanship

REF: (A) UNVIE VIENNA 127

¶11. (SBU) Summary: At the March 11-20 Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Cuba announced the candidacy of its Ambassador Norma M. Goicochea Estenoz for one of the two co-chairs of the UNODC Finance and Governance Working Group (FinGov WG). The G-77 will not oppose her, nor allow for a competing candidate from within their ranks. However, speculation still surrounds who will come forward as a candidate for the other co-chair position. Germany, Cuba's main adversary during negotiations leading up to the CND, is giving some indications that it may be willing to serve as the other co-chair. While Goicochea would have a formidable counterweight in the German Ambassador, Mission is also concerned that such an arrangement might simply reinforce and aggravate the unfortunate "bloc" mentality that some G-77 members have tried to foster. End Summary.

Cuba Makes its Move,
and G-77 Goes Along

¶12. (SBU) As previously reported (Ref A) Cuban Ambassador to the UN in Vienna Norma M. Goicochea Estenoz is seeking to be one of the two co-chairs of the FinGov WG. Few treated this as a good sign, with several G-77 delegations privately lamenting the signal this was sending to other delegations (especially donor states). Throughout negotiations during the past year on ways to improve the financial and administrative situation of the UNODC the Cuban mission has consistently taken an aggressive, inflexible and generally combative approach to the proceedings. While the G-77 Group has a common position on such issues, and never undercut Cuba on the floor or in informal consultations, there are many within the group who seek to push the G-77 agenda forward with more tact and a less divisive mentality. Nevertheless, the G-77 Group has made it clear that they would not propose another candidate to compete against Goicochea.

(Note: The two Co-Chairs are to be jointly nominated by the Extended Bureaus of the CND and CCPCJ. The nominations will then be endorsed during the April CCPCJ, and a pro forma CND intercessional which would most likely occur during or immediately after the CCPCJ.

Thus, the time for a delegation to express support or opposition to any candidate would be during the meetings of the Extended Bureaus. End note.)

Goicochea's Reputation in Vienna

¶13. (SBU) In Vienna, Goicochea has developed the reputation of a savvy UN operator. She is the chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and as such gets generally high marks from member states for her ability to navigate competing interests (such as Pakistan-Iran nuclear issues). In the IAEA context, she has generally been an unhelpful defender of Iran's positions. However, in the UNODC context, Cuba is a paltry financial contributor, and a vocal and impolitic critic of its operations. She has criticized UN Vienna's

budgeting process for being unsynchronized with that in New York and has complained about enhanced security procedures at the Vienna UN compound that she viewed as inconveniencing Ambassadors. Many are concerned that the combative attitude she and her delegation demonstrated during previous FinGov negotiations and on the budget aspects of the UNODC resolutions, whether in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs or in the Crime Commission, would translate into a co-chair less interested in pragmatic solutions and consensus building, and more in conducting a political show.

Will Germany Balance Cuba?

¶4. (SBU) Since Cuba's announcement of Goicochea's candidacy, WEOG and donor countries have been attempting to find a candidate that will be a substantive and personal counterweight. Many ambassadors have explicitly refused any consideration, citing higher priorities like the IAEA, or their upcoming departure from Vienna. As such, mission has yet to identify anyone who expressed clear interest in the job. (Note: DCM approached his Japanese counterpart, Ambassador Yasuyoshi Komizo, who has been deeply engaged in finance and governance issues in Vienna, and has UN secretarial experience. However, Komizo declined citing other priorities for the coming year. End note.)

¶5. (SBU) Germany has been one of the leading proponents of finance and governance reform of the UNODC. German Ambassador Rüdiger Ludeking has taken a personal interest in the issue, and was deeply involved in the final stages of the working group's negotiations. On several occasions he engaged in heated and blunt arguments with G-77 counselors on the very topic of the terms of the chairmanship

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itself. Germany has made it clear they have a "bad taste in their mouth" after the negotiations, and are not optimistic about the future of the WG. On the other hand, Germany states it is deeply committed to making the WG an effective organ, and as such will not stand by and watch it "be hijacked by Cuba or the G-77."

¶6. (SBU) On March 26 our German contact approached Missionoff about the possibility of the German Ambassador as co-chair. Missionoff asked if this was a tactical move to thwart the Cuban, or a genuine candidacy. He replied that while his Ambassador is not necessarily "keen" to take on the extra work, he is committed to the WG. However, he also stated that perhaps it was the only way to successfully oppose the Cuban candidate. "We would put forward my Ambassador's name", he explained, "and at the same time oppose the Cuban candidacy through the extended bureaus. He expressed his belief that the German candidacy would thus draw opposition from the G-77, leading to a rejection of both the German and Cuban candidates, and nomination of two less extreme and controversial chairs. Our German interlocutor stressed that no decision had been made by his Ambassador, but promised to keep Mission informed.

Comment

¶7. (SBU) A Cuban co-chair, especially in the person of Goicochea, who served in New York before coming to Vienna, would reinforce the north-south divide in the UNODC. Her delegation has vowed to reject our budget "mantra" in all resolutions, such as "within existing resources." Further, Cuba has shown no restraint in its desire to micromanage the UNODC's secretariat. A Cuban co-chair of the WG could turn its agenda in a direction opposed to US interests. Possible German co-chairmanship, as a counterweight to Cuba, would fan the flames. The best solution is to have alternative co-chairs from less controversial delegations. Mission will continue to explore alternatives, and encourage Germany and all member states to approach the FinGov WG as a chance for dialogue and a venue of pragmatic consensus building. However, with many ambassadors departing Vienna over the coming year, and others reluctant or uninterested in the WG, the pickings may be slim.

Schulte